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THE JAPANESE EVIL IN CALIFORNIA

BY JAMES D. PHELAN

UNITED STATES SENATOR FOR CALIFORNIA

THE farming communities of California are organizing to suppress the Japanese evil.¹ The State is practically of one mind on the subject, and because it is a California problem, California is entitled to speak with authority. Of course, it is only a matter of time when the Japanese will spread eastward, but that will not be until California has been exhausted. The soil and climate of the Pacific Coast are very attractive to the Japanese, and the remuneration for labor is high. They will not voluntarily emigrate from Japan to Manchuria, nor to the Philippines. When America is closed to them, they will necessarily have to spread in Asiatic territory, and that is where they belong. They belong there, because they are non-assimilable here. They compose a permanently foreign element, and precipitate a race question far more serious than that in the South. Why "more serious"? Because they are a masterful people, of great industry and ingenuity. They have no disposition in California to work for wages, but seek control of the soil by purchase, leasehold or a share of the crops, and, under these circumstances, become impossible competitors. They know no rest and respect no standards. In other words, the white man is driven from the soil, and that is the particular point which I desire to impress at this time upon the people of the East.

¹The "Fourteen Counties Association," embracing most of the great Sacramento Valley in the Northern part of the State, and the Allen Regulation League in the Imperial Valley on the Mexican border, are organizations which have been formed to combat the influx of Japanese, and their slogan is: "Keep the land in the hands of the white people."

The following newspaper dispatch from Stockton of July eighteenth shows organization work in the great central San Joaquin Valley:

"Figures given out here today by Secretary F. Charles Cloudsley of the Service Club, an organization of 3,400 returned soldiers of San Joaquin County, which is waging a campaign for Americanization, shows that alien births in San Joaquin County, outside of Stockton for the first six months of 1919 exceeded those of citizens. Births of children of alien parents totaled 169, while 113 births to American citizens were recorded. Japanese births during the period were 104."

The soil is the foundation of everything. Race, family, citizenship, thrift, prosperity, patriotism, success in peace and security in war—all rest upon the soil. Dispossess the people and they are condemned to poverty and vagabondage.

A Government which rests upon the morality, intelligence, and loyalty of the people can not suffer the deterioration of the people, because its own life is involved. That is one reason why all arguments in favor of increased production by undesirable immigrants fall to the ground. Production is nothing compared with population, and the character of the population determines the character of the Government. We could well afford to produce less and have a free, happy, and homogeneous population, tilling the soil and contributing, by family life, education, religion, science, and art to the upbuilding of our Western civilization. What boots it if California produces great crops and men perish, unmourned, in a hopeless economic struggle?

In the attitude of Californians there is no question of race prejudice. It is simply a question of self-preservation. The money produced from the soil by Japanese in California circulates among Japanese, in shop and store, which are conducted by their own countrymen; and thence it flows to Japan, impoverishing the State that provides it, to be invested in industries which compete with our own. So it is not only a ceaseless drain, but it becomes an aggressive antagonist. Japanese steamship lines are now carrying the commerce of the Pacific, and Japanese articles of all kinds are made in imitation of our own. There are upwards of eighty thousand Japanese in California, and they are as much a tributary colony of Japan as though the flag of Nippon had supplanted the Stars and Stripes. Most people have heard of the overwhelming invasion of the Territory of Hawaii, where extraordinary conditions prevail. There are probably 110,000 Japanese in Hawaii, as against 12,000 Americans. There is compulsory education, but the Japanese children go to Japanese schools before and after the regular school hours, where they are taught Japanese and instructed in foreign traditions and usages. It is estimated that in ten years the native Japanese will outvote the white and native Hawaiian population and control the Legislature and all municipal offices—as the Mayor, the Chief of Police, and the Council. The Hawaiian Islands have been

described militarily as the "Key of the Pacific." Unless there is some restriction, this shall be the fate of California.

Let us see what has been done to avert this evil, and how far our subserviency to Japanese diplomacy has exposed us to danger. John J. Leary, Jr., recounts in a recent *McClure's* his conversations with Theodore Roosevelt under the heading, "Why I Broke With Taft." Among other things which led to the estrangement was the Japanese treaty of 1911, which superseded the treaty of 1894. Mr. Roosevelt said:

We had a perfectly good treaty with Japan, under which we had the right to pass exclusion laws. Japan asked that we do not do so, offering to make a "Gentleman's Agreement" to keep her folks at home if we would not pass such a law. The Agreement was made and kept, but we had the right to enforce exclusion under the treaty if Japan did not do what was right. Mr. Taft, however, went to work and made a new treaty, in which that right to exclude was waived, we relying on their "Gentleman's Agreement," which they may or may not live up to, as circumstances may seem best to them.

That was a mistake, and how California ever let that treaty go through is beyond me. Now, as matters stand, Japan can do as it pleases. The part of wisdom was to have retained that provision of the old treaty as a club.

I remember protesting against this treaty in common with other Californians, but our protest was ignored. In 1906, however, Mr. Roosevelt himself labored under the same spell of the Orient, when he threatened California for attempting to segregate Japanese students in the California public schools. Japan had just emerged from successful war against China; she had taken Formosa; she had assumed control of Korea, and she had beaten Russia. Mr. Roosevelt respected her military prowess, and, as in all our dealings with Japan, sought to avoid "causes of irritation." Under these circumstances California yielded, protesting, however, that her State jurisdiction gave her exclusive authority in all matters of schools, marriage, land, and inheritance. To-day in many California schools in the rural districts sixty per cent. of the enrollment are Japanese. Roosevelt negotiated the "Gentleman's Agreement," so-called, of 1907. Japan agreed to refuse passports to her laborers who had been coming in great numbers to California; but all students, merchants, teachers, and professional men were not to be denied passports. Japan made these exceptions: She held the right to issue passports to

any laborer who had once been in America and wished to return; to the parents, wives, and children of laborers in America, and to any laborer who had secured title to land in America and wished to go to possess it.

The operations of the "Gentleman's Agreement" have been unsatisfactory. The Japanese steamship companies, which practically control the passenger routes between the Orient and the two Americas, have brought large numbers of Japanese to Mexico, and they have been smuggled over the border. Sometimes they are apprehended and deported, but it is very difficult to guard the extensive border, and so, notwithstanding the Agreement, the Japanese population in California is constantly increasing. Under advice, departing Japanese laborers sign leases in which they have no interest in order to return.

The device has been practiced of marrying the Japanese men in California to women in Japan whom they have never seen by the pretense of exchanging photographs, and these women are known as "proxy" or "picture" brides. I have recently witnessed as many as one hundred and fifty arriving on one ship in San Francisco harbor, and these unfortunate chattels, I am told, recoil in many instances from the ordeal when, through the bars of the immigration station, they see for the first time the images of their "husbands." There is no ceremony. Japan has simply given the women passports as wives, under the "Gentleman's Agreement," and they come in. They are led away by their masters and serve a twofold purpose, both in violation of the spirit of the Agreement, which was to restrict the increase of Japanese laborers. They are laborers. They work in the fields as laborers, side by side with the men; and, being remarkably prolific, they bear many children to them to swell the increasing Japanese tide. The California State Board of Health, in its twenty-fifth biennial report, gives the following vital statistics of births for 1917:

White	47,313
Japanese	4,108
Chinese	419
Negro	328
Indian	52

The report makes this comment: "The per cent. white decreased steadily through the last twelve years; thus, 98.04 (1906), 97.07, 96.8, 86.3, 96.1, 95.5, 84.6, 93.2, 91.9,

91.3, 91.4, 90.6 (1917). The decrease in the proportion of white babies is due to marked increases in Japanese birth registration, as follows: 134 (1906), 221, 455, 682, 719, 995, 1,467, 2,215, 2,874, 3,342, 3,721, and 4,108 (1917)."

This is three thousand per cent. increase! Dr. J. L. Pomery, County Health Officer of Los Angeles, gave recently in his report the birth rate by races in the rural sections of Los Angeles County, as follows:

White	48 %
Japanese	33.4%
Mexican	8.2%
Chinese1%
Negro3%

In other words, one-third of the births in Los Angeles County, California—one of the most fertile counties in the State, outside of incorporated cities and towns—is Japanese. In Placer County, California, the birth rate has been given as follows:

1916 Japanese.....	67	White.....	119
1917 Japanese.....	93	White.....	79
1918 Japanese.....	123	White.....	61

The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that, where the Japanese come, the whites go. It is easy to calculate how, by geometric progression, the Japanese in a very few decades will have supplanted the men and women of California who have pioneered, developed, and occupied the land.

In 1913, California, as a measure of protection, undertook to pass alien land laws. Now Japan forbids foreigners to own her land, just as, for the same economic reasons which influence us, she prohibits the immigration of Chinese. Again there was an uproar, and the State Department at Washington made protest, but in a milder form than during the agitation of the school question, which remains unsolved. Finally, laws were passed denying the privilege to own agricultural land to persons ineligible to citizenship. This affected the Japanese principally. By a compromise, such persons were allowed to lease land for three-year terms. What was the result? The Japanese started at once to circumvent the law. They excited the cupidity of farmers by offering them large prices for their land or for leaseholds. In the matter of leaseholds, for

instance, they made numberless leases for the same farm, one following the expiration of the other, and making use of different names; and in purchasing the land they resorted to the simple expedient of putting it in the names of their children, born on the soil, and therefore citizens, with all the rights appertaining to that status. They also organized corporations with more than one-half of the stockholders American citizens, as required by law—"dummy" countrymen, or ever-complacent lawyers. In these matters they are proceeding in violation of the intent and spirit of the law, as though there were no law at all. They are rapidly acquiring the most productive lands in California.

The California Legislature, realizing that the Japanese were acquiring the land in spite of prohibitive laws, and that they were actually controlling the great vegetable and fruit crops of the State, took up the question this year through one or two patriotic and farseeing members. At the instance of the Japanese Association, the powerful propagandists of Japan in this country, the old issue that it might cause "international friction" was raised. The President and Secretary of State were in Paris, dealing with the Japanese on questions of war spoils, immigration and racial equality, and when asked by the Legislature for advice the word came that action would be untimely. But action would doubtless have strengthened the President by showing the Japanese diplomatists that California was alive to her rights and resentful of Federal interference.

The timid Governor and Legislature surrendered.

The bills proposed to abolish leases to aliens; to remodel the corporation laws so they could not be used as instruments of law evasion; to permit separate schools for Japanese, where existing schools were too small, in the judgment of Boards of Education, for both Japanese and whites; and to require both parties to be present for the legal solemnization of marriage. These measures will come up again, and will probably be passed. Meantime, a drive is on among the Japanese in California to acquire land and import women. If our country, like England, was ruled in emergencies by orders in council, such an order should be issued to stop this practice now.

Congress should pass an exclusion law at once.

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